

How to Purify Household Water



Contents

Purifying Household Water



Purifying Household Water

Water storage and purification is a vital component of disaster preparedness.

Storing Water Safely

- Store water in thoroughly washed plastic, fiberglass, or metal containers that are lined with enamel.
- Never reuse a container that contained toxic materials.
- Plastic containers such as soft drink bottles are best. You can also purchase food-grade plastic buckets or drums.
- Seal water containers tightly, label with date, and store in a cool, dark place.
- Replace water every six months.

Water Purification

- There are many ways to purify water, but none is perfect.
- Boiling and disinfecting will kill most microbes but will not remove other contaminants, such as heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals.

- Before purifying water, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom, or strain them through layers of paper towels or a clean cloth.

Boiling

- Boiling is the safest method of purifying water.
- Bring the water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes.
- Let the water cool before drinking.

Distillation

- Distillation involves boiling water and then collecting the vapor that condenses back to water.
- To distill, fill a pot halfway with water. Tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right side up when the lid is upside down. Make sure the cup is not dangling into the water, and boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid into the cup is distilled.

Disinfection

- You can use household bleach to kill microorganisms. Use only regular household bleach that contains 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented or color safe bleaches, or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water. Stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.
- Note: If you are filling a five gallon or larger container, you must still use the 16 drops per gallon method. Do not attempt to convert the drops into any other measure.
- Do not use other agents like iodine or water treatment products sold in camping stores to disinfect water. These agents may not contain 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite, which is the only recommended agent to kill microorganisms.

**WASHINGTON
MILITARY
DEPARTMENT**



**EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT
DIVISION**

OFFICE LOCATION
Building 20
Camp Murray, WA

MAILING ADDRESS
Building 20, MS: TA-20
Camp Murray, WA
98430-5122